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Governor Cuomo Announces Agreement on Evaluation Guidelines That Will Make New York State a National Leader on Teacher Accountability

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Albany, NY (February 16, 2012)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, New York State Education Commissioner John King, and New York State United Teachers President Richard C. Iannuzzi today announced a groundbreaking agreement on a new statewide evaluation system that will make New York State a national leader in holding teachers accountable for student achievement.

The agreement gives significant guidance to local school districts for the implementation of a teacher evaluation system that is based on multiple measures of performance including student achievement and rigorous classroom observations. The agreement follows through on the state's commitment to put in place a real and effective teacher evaluation system as a condition of the \$700 million granted through the federal Race to the Top program.

"Today's agreement puts in place a groundbreaking new statewide teacher evaluation system that will put students first and make New York a national leader in holding teachers accountable for student achievement," Governor Cuomo said. "This agreement is exactly what is needed to transform our state's public education system, and I am pleased that by working together and putting the needs of students ahead of politics we were able to reach this agreement."

State Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr., said, "The goal is and always has been to help students - to give them every opportunity to succeed in college and careers. To make that happen, we need to improve teaching and learning. We owe it to our students to make sure every classroom is led by an effective teacher and every school is led by an effective principal. Today, the Governor's leadership and his commitment to our students has helped us take a strong step toward that goal."

New York State United Teachers President Richard C. Iannuzzi, said, "Teachers support high standards and accountability for our profession. We believe today's agreement is good for students and fair to teachers. It includes two principles we believe are essential. First, a child is more than a standardized test score. While there is a place for standardized testing in measuring teacher effectiveness, tests must be used appropriately. Secondly, the purpose of evaluations must be to help all teachers improve and to advance excellence in our profession. This agreement acknowledges those key principles. The settlement also reinforces how important it is for teachers to have a voice in establishing standards of

professional effectiveness and in developing evaluations that meet the needs of local communities."

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg said, "This is very good news for the 1.1 million school children of New York City – and it will benefit students for generations to come. It will help us to create a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation system that will ensure that teachers who are rated 'ineffective' can be given the support they need to grow -- or be moved out of the classroom. I want to thank the Governor for his leadership on this issue, as well as Merryl Tisch, John King, and Mike Mulgrew, who were all instrumental in this process."

United Federation of Teachers President Michael Mulgrew said, "The UFT and the Governor have reached an agreement on an appeal process for New York City teachers that includes the kind of independent, third party component that the UFT has been seeking. The appeal process will not go into effect unless and until Mayor Bloomberg negotiates agreement s with the UFT for an overall teacher evaluation deal and for schools eligible for School Improvement Grants (SIGs). I want to congratulate Governor Cuomo and NYSUT for their hard work in finding common ground on the statewide issues that separated them. Their agreement recognizes that students are more than a test score. I want to thank the Governor for his efforts to find a similar resolution for the issues that separate the UFT and Mayor Bloomberg. Chancellor Walcott's asserted that the city needed to close 33 SIG schools because there was no agreement possible on an appeals process for teachers. That process has now been laid out for the SIG schools. Despite this agreement, Mayor Bloomberg still seems determined to close those schools."

Details of the plan are as follows:

Teacher Performance – 60 points

Under the agreement, 60 percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on rigorous and nationally recognized measures of teacher performance. The agreement requires that a majority of the teacher performance points will be based on classroom observations by an administrator or principal, and at least one observation will be unannounced. The remaining points will be based upon defined standards including observations by independent trained evaluators, peer classroom observations, student and parent feedback from evaluators, and evidence of performance through student portfolios.

Student Achievement in State and Local Assessments– 40 points

Under the agreement, 40 percent of a teacher's evaluation will be based on student academic achievement, with 20 percent from state testing and 20 percent from a list of three testing options including state tests, third party assessments/tests approved by the SED and locally developed tests that will be subject to SED review and approval. Under the plan, school districts will also have the option of using state tests to measure up to 40 percent of a teacher's rating.

Rating System

The agreement significantly tightens the scoring system to ensure student achievement and teacher performance are both properly taken into account for teacher ratings. Teachers or principals that are rated ineffective in the 40 points could not receive a developing score overall.

Ineffective: 0 – 64

Developing: 65 – 74

Effective: 75 – 90

Highly Effective: 91 – 100

Assigning a Curve for the Ratings

The agreement sets forth, for the first time, a standard for school districts and teacher unions to set the allocation of points or the "curve" for the teacher ratings. The curve must be allocated in a manner that a teacher can receive one of the four ratings, and the SED Commissioner will be able to reject insufficiently set curves.

SED Commissioner Final Review

The agreement also, for the first time, gives the SED Commissioner the authority to approve or disapprove local evaluation plans that are deemed insufficient. This will add rigor to the process and ensure evaluation plans comply with the law.

New York City Expedited Appeals Process

Today's announcement also includes an expedited and streamlined appeals process for the New York City School District that becomes effective on January 17, 2013 if New York City and the UFT agree to an overall evaluation system

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